

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-66 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, 49, and 57-61 are independent. In the Final Office Action dated December 5, 2003, Claims 1-7, 12-20, 25-33, 38-44, 49-52, and 57-66 were rejected and Claims 8-11, 21-24, 34-37, 45-48, and 53-56 were objected to, but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Following this response, Claims 1-10, 12-23, 25-36, 38-47, 49-55, and 62-66 remain in this application with claims 11, 24, 37, 48, and 56-61 canceled. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections to the claims remaining in this application in turn.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Final Office Action dated December 5, 2003, the Examiner rejected independent Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, 49 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,295,522 ("*Boesch*"). Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, 49 have been amended to include the subject matter of allowable dependent Claims 11, 24, 37, 48, and 56, respectively. Claims 11, 24, 37, 48, and 56-61 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, and 49 patentably distinguish the present invention over the cited art, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, and 49.

Dependent Claims 2-10, 12-14, 16-23, 25-27, 29-36, 38-40, 42-47, 50-55, and 62-66 are also allowable at least for the reasons above regarding independent Claims

1, 15, 28, 41, and 49, and by virtue of their respective dependencies upon independent Claims 1, 15, 28, 41, and 49. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 2-10, 12-14, 16,-23, 25-27, 29-36, 38-40, 42-47, 50-55, and 62-66.

II. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner, placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments of the claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

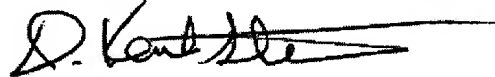
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are

based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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